



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

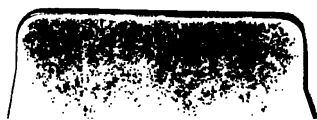
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

A Plea for the Weekly Offertory.



---

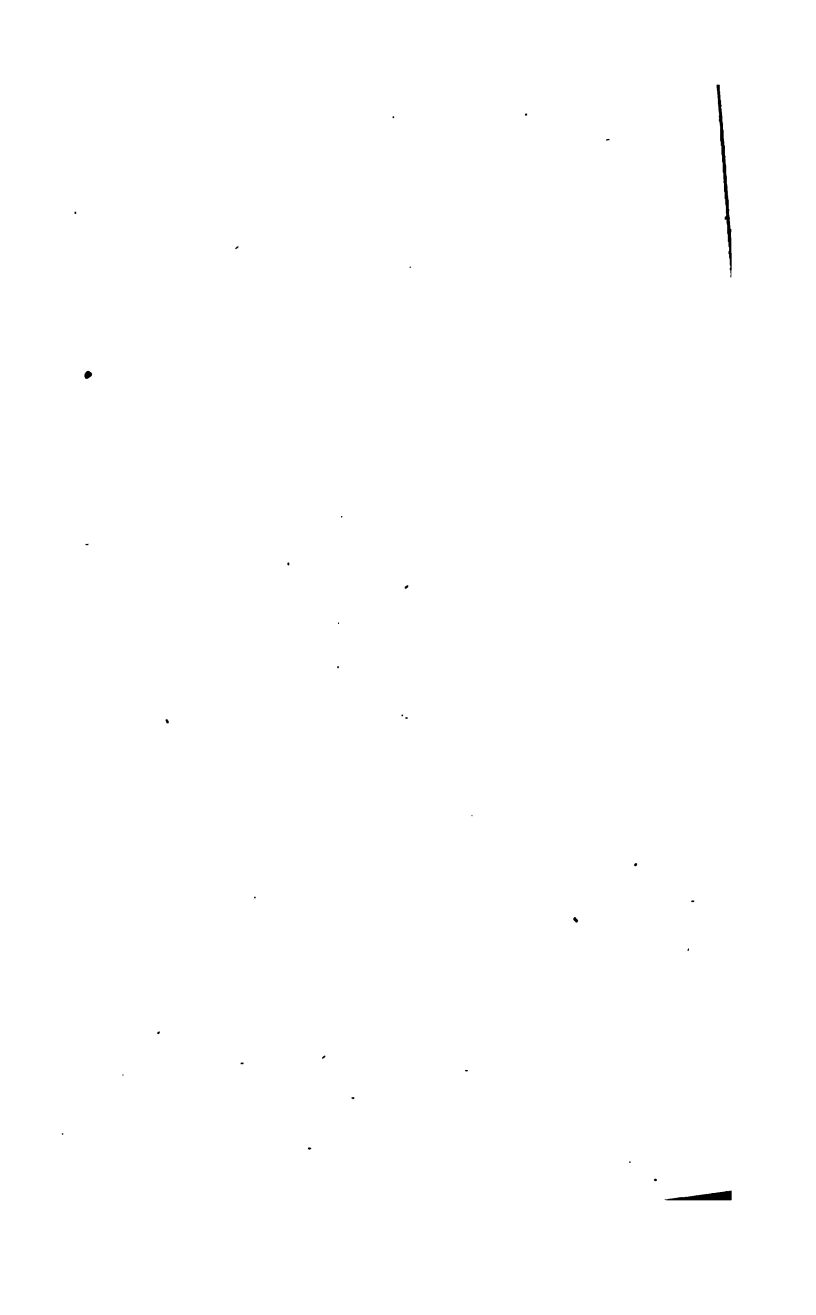
00. z.  
413.











*THE RIGHT WAY THE BEST WAY; OR,  
A PLEA FOR THE WEEKLY OFFERTORY:*

BEING

FOUR SERMONS

PREACHED IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY  
AND ALL SAINTS, HAWKSWORTH,

BY THE

REV. GEORGE HUNT SMYTTAN,

RECTOR.

WITH

AN APPENDIX,

SHEWING THE FRUITS OF FOLLOWING THE APOSTLES' RULE  
IN A SMALL COUNTRY PARISH

---

LONDON AND OXFORD:

JOHN HENRY AND JAMES PARKER.

NOTTINGHAM: JOSEPH SULLEY. GRANTHAM: BUSHBY.

LINCOLN: LODER. EDINBURGH: B. GRANT AND CO.

NEWARK: RIDGE AND CO.

M DCCC LVIII.

120 2 413.





PRINTED BY MESSRS. PARKER, CORN-MARKET, OXFORD.

## P R E F A C E.

---

It is often asserted, that though the Weekly Offertory may answer very well in Towns, it *cannot* succeed in small Country Parishes. It is because the experiment has been tried in a *very* small Parish, and because the result of the trial shews the entire fallacy of such an assertion, that this little book is published. When these Sermons were written, the author had not the least idea of printing them; they are the ordinary, plain, homely sermons which he is in the habit of preaching to a homely, though intelligent, Congregation. Two of them have not a *direct* reference to the Weekly Offertory; but every opportunity was taken during the year to bring the *principle* of Almsgiving before the people in one way or other, and therefore it is hoped they may not be considered out of place in this Volume. It is hoped, too, that the Statement at the end may encourage some Brother whose *wish* is to act up to the Church's Rule, but who has hitherto

been fearful of doing so, *at once to begin*, and leave the result in God's Hands.

With these substantial fruits to gather, surely no one need fear to substitute God's way for man's even in the matter of Ministerial Support. Endowments for the Clergy are, of course, in every case, most desirable; but where these do not exist, what a blessed thing it would be if all Houses of Prayer in this land were entirely *free*, and they that served the Altar lived by the Altar. God speed the day when "pew-rents" may be a thing unknown and unheard of in the Church of England,—a thing only to be remembered with wonder and penitence. In every matter, great or small, it cannot but be found that **THE RIGHT WAY IS THE BEST WAY.**

*The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, 1858.*

•

## SERMON I.

[PREACHED ON THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS, 1856.]

---

1 COR. xvi. 2.

“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”

HAS this passage of Holy Scripture ever struck you, brethren? You have read it, I doubt not, and heard it read; but have you reflected on this injunction, and regarded it as one of practical concern to yourselves? It was given by the Apostle St. Paul to the Corinthian Believers, as a rule to guide them in the great Christian duty of Almsgiving, a duty which is constantly pressed upon all the servants of God in His holy Word. And what in effect is this injunction? “On the first day of the week,” — upon the Lord’s Day, the day on which Jesus Christ rose triumphant from the grave, which day accordingly took the place of the Jewish Sabbath, (or seventh day of the week, appointed to be kept holy,) and on which the followers of Christ invariably assembled them-

selves together for the breaking of bread and prayer; that "on the first day of the week," (or "*every* first day of the week," as it might be rendered,) "every one of them was to lay by him in store." That is to say, every one of them was to set apart a certain portion of the week's earnings or income, according "as God had prospered him,"—in proportion to that measure of this world's goods which it had pleased God to bestow on him, as derived from his lawful calling, and the fruits of his industry and labour. And they were thus to set aside a certain sum for charitable purposes, and as a thanksgiving to God,—greater or smaller, as the case might be,—once a-week, and on that day of the week when they more especially met together for public worship, in order that there might be no gatherings when the Apostle himself came to them. Now from this it is evident that the Apostle (under the direction of the Holy Ghost) enjoined a regular, systematic mode of fulfilling the duty of Almsgiving, as a more excellent way than only giving now and then of their substance, under the influence of some such excitement as the Apostle's personal presence amongst them, or just when some

more particular and pressing demand was made upon their benevolence.

It is very true that St. Paul was writing with reference to that especial object which was then calling forth the charities of the Christian converts throughout the world; *viz.* the "collection for the saints" in Judea, who were then in great distress, and suffering much from a grievous famine which afflicted their land. But there are few, if any, of the particular injunctions of the Holy Scriptures which are not also of general application, in their spirit, at all events, if not according to the letter. Nor can it be said, either, that this was a special rule laid down owing to some peculiar circumstances of the Corinthians; for we find, from the verse before the text, that the Apostle had given the same order to the Galatian, and most probably to other Churches also. And we may therefore very fairly infer, to take the lowest view, that in the estimation of an inspired Apostle, the best and most efficacious method of giving alms is to do it *weekly*, so that from this accumulating store may be drawn what is required for the need of others. Accordingly we find that the early Christians *continued to act on this rule. For instance.*

we learn from one of their writers in the second century after Christ :—" Then (that is, at some particular part of divine service on the Lord's Day) they that are able and willing give what they think fit, and what is thus collected is laid up in the hands of the President, who distributes it to orphans and widows, and other Christians, as their wants require <sup>a</sup>."

Now, brethren, I fear we must all plead guilty to the charge of not carrying out the Apostle's injunction, even privately. Whatever we may give when special calls are made upon us, I do not suppose there is one of us who has hitherto devoted a certain proportion of our means as an offering to God, and for charitable purposes, each Lord's Day, according as God hath prospered him. At any rate, the primitive practice of making such an offering during the public Service of the Church has been almost universally laid aside in England for many years,—except when the Holy Communion is about to be administered, (by those who are going to receive it,) and on occasions when sermons are preached and collections made for any particular purpose.

Yet it is not the Church's fault that the

<sup>a</sup> Justin Martyr.

Apostle's rule is neglected ; it is *our own*, and that of our forefathers for the last generation or two. For the Church has provided that there should be such a regular, systematic giving of alms as St. Paul enjoined in the text, and it is *we* who have failed to make use of this provision. If you will turn to the Communion-Office in your Prayer-books, you will find after the Nicene Creed certain sentences, chiefly taken from the Canonical Scriptures<sup>b</sup>, one or more of which, at the discretion of the minister, she has appointed to be read regularly after the sermon or homily. The rubrical direction is as follows :—"Then shall the priest return to the Lord's Table, and begin the Offertory, saying one or more of these sentences following, as he thinketh most convenient in his discretion." These sentences, or texts, are all exhortations and encouragements to liberality in Alms-giving, and accordingly, at the end of them we find another direction, to the effect, that "Whilst these Sentences are reading, the Deacons, Churchwardens, or other fit person, shall receive the Alms for the Poor, and other devotions (or offerings) of the people,

<sup>b</sup> Some are taken from the Apocrypha.



in a decent bason ; and reverently bring it to the Priest, who shall humbly present and place it upon the Holy Table." It is evident that this does not refer only to instances when the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is celebrated, for the next Rubric begins,—"*And when there is a Communion*, the Priest shall then place upon the Table so much Bread and Wine as he shall think sufficient." This will be still more evident to you if you turn to the directions at the end of the Communion-Office, the first of which says, "Upon the Sundays and other Holy-days (if there be no Communion) shall be said all that is appointed at the Communion, until the end of the general Prayer, (*For the whole state of Christ's Church Militant here in earth*),"—which prayer, I need hardly remind you, comes *after* the Offertory. So that it is plain the Church intended the Offertory to be made whether there was a Communion or not. It is true that in the Church Militant prayer there is a clause making provision, "if there be no alms," but this is evidently meant as an exceptional case, and the offering of alms as the general rule,—whereas we have just reversed the order ; and even on

those occasions when the Offertory is made, it is very rarely that any seem to think themselves called upon to give, except those who are about to become partakers of the blessed Sacrament.

I cannot but think it a most grievous thing that the Church's method of Almsgiving, which is in such strict accordance with St. Paul's rule, has been so long laid aside and overlooked. For, consequently, resort has been had to an occasional charity sermon, — with which, of course, no fault could be found in itself, if it were not made a mere substitute for, rather than an incidental stimulus to, that more systematic and regular giving which the Apostle and the Church would have us practise. In our Towns, such means as "Charity-balls," and Charity-concerts and Bazaars, or sales of fancy-work, are commonly employed to raise money for charitable purposes; but surely all these savour more of the *world* than of Christ. People go to enjoy themselves after their own fashion; a great proportion of the funds received is swallowed up in the necessary expenses; and the balance (very often a mere trifle) is handed over to the proposed object.

A great deal of excitement and vanity is mixed up with it all, and, I fear, very little *true charity*. However, with such things we, in our quiet seclusion, are not much concerned ; and it is not needful to do more than just allude to the existence and inconsistency of such methods of what is called “ raising money for charitable purposes.”

Perhaps the nearest approach to the Apostle’s rule of Almsgiving, prevalent in these days, is such Parochial Associations as we have had for some time amongst ourselves for Missionary purposes. By their means there is *a* systematic laying-by in store, at all events ; and they have proved, wherever they have been adopted, most useful in helping on many a good work. Our own was commenced in connection with the Gospel Propagation Society, because I thought that Society, (inasmuch as it is the *oldest* Missionary Society in connection with our Church, and because it provides the Means of Grace to our own colonists—our own flesh and blood, and neglected fellow-Christians in foreign parts—as well as labours for the conversion of the heathen,) had a paramount claim on all members of the Church.

Unhappily, some difference of opinion prevails with regard to this venerable Society, (without the existence of which, I have no hesitation in saying, our Colonial possessions would now have been in a state worse than heathenish); and misapprehensions and suspicions likewise exist in many minds with respect to it, all of which our excellent Bishop has clearly shewn to be groundless, in an admirable speech delivered by him at Nottingham, in the course of the present year. Now these differences of opinion and misapprehensions, which I very much lament, have prevented that harmonious working of the Association amongst ourselves which I very earnestly desired. But, notwithstanding, I have every reason to be most thankful for the success which has attended the Association,—a success far beyond my expectations, when it was established five years ago. The results are as follows:—

				£.	s.	d.
In 1852 we collected	.	.	.	8	18	1½
In 1853	.	.	.	9	8	8½
In 1854	.	.	.	10	11	4½
In 1855	.	.	.	9	12	11½
In 1856	.	.	.	10	0	7
				<hr/>		
				£48 11 8½		

So that since we commenced, we have, in this small Parish, by this means alone, contributed nearly £50 towards the great work of providing the Means of Grace to our Colonies, and evangelizing the surrounding heathen.

But still, such Associations, though they may be very useful helps, ought not to take the place of the Apostle's and the Church's rule ; and I feel the best reparation we can make for the long neglect of that rule, is as speedy and hearty a return to it as possible. It has from the very first been the end that I have had in view, and I have at length resolved, my brethren, to invite you to return to it with the beginning of another year. I purpose, therefore, now laying aside our Parochial Association, and commencing on Sunday next with the regular WEEKLY OFFERTORY. And here I may just mention, that the restoration of the Offertory has the fullest sanction and strongest approval of our own Bishop ; and that it has already been restored, with the happiest results, in several parishes, both in town and country.

I feel, though, that it would not be right to confine the proceeds of our offerings in God's House to any one single channel or means of

promoting God's work. There are five societies in close connection with the Church of England, which have all sprung from one stock ; and these are :—

1. 'The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

2. 'The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

3. The National School Society.

4. 'The Society for Enlarging and Building of Churches.

5. The Society for providing Additional Clergy in large and populous Districts.

Three of these societies are incorporated by Royal Charter.

There is also a sixth society, which is not incorporated, and which differs in its constitution from all of the others, but which has in view the great end of converting the heathen to the knowledge of the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus,—I mean the Church Missionary Society.

I propose, therefore, (after, of course, reserving a sufficient sum for ministering to the temporal wants and comforts of the poorer brethren in our own Parish, as aforetime,) that the residue should be divided among these six

Societies which minister to the spiritual wants of our fellow-creatures, and strive hard to promote the interests of our Redeemer's Kingdom on earth. Special occasions may arise when the proceeds of the Offertory will be devoted, for that day, to some special object,—such as the County Infirmary, or the Diocesan Board of Education, or any other charitable purpose, or religious Society, for which there may be some particular call, and in behalf of which a sermon may be preached. I am far from saying that our giving of alms, especially with those who are better off amongst us, should be *confined* to the Weekly Offertory; but I trust you will all feel with me the propriety, and the advantage and privilege, of henceforward conforming to the Apostle's injunction of laying by, on the first day of each week, a portion of the week's earning or income, according as the Lord had prospered you, as a thank-offering to your God. And so, as the Psalmist sings, "We shall ascribe unto the Lord the honour due unto His Name: *bring presents*, and come into His courts."

The Jews hardly ever presented themselves in the Temple empty-handed, without casting a

gift into the sacred treasury,—whereof we have a striking instance in the poor widow's mite, so highly commended by our blessed Lord. We have seen what the practice was amongst the early Christians. It is only in comparatively recent times—during that state of cold torpor into which our own Church unhappily fell for the last 150 years or so—that within her pale the Weekly Offertory has fallen into disuse. In foreign countries, the alms of the people are almost invariably gathered on the Lord's Day. In the other part of this Island, amongst the Presbyterians in Scotland, the poorest person hardly ever thinks of going to his place of worship without a halfpenny or a penny in his hand, to offer, either at the door as he enters, or towards the end of the service, when an almsdish is handed round; and I believe this custom prevails to some extent in Ireland, and also amongst some of the dissenting bodies in England. Therefore, brethren, independently of the Scriptural obligation, and the Church's requirement in conformity thereto, we ought not, for very shame, to be behindhand in giving regularly and systematically of our substance to the Lord.



I am quite sure that in this way, not only is MORE collected for charitable purposes, but this periodical giving is better for ourselves than only an occasional gathering made under the influence of excitement, after some warm and stirring appeal to our sympathies. We all feel (who think seriously about the matter) the advantage, nay, almost the necessity, if we would perform these duties profitably, of having stated times for prayer, and reading of God's Word, and public worship, and for meditating in regular order on the various parts of the Gospel scheme ; just as we feel the advantage—nay, necessity, if we would keep our bodies in health and vigour—of having stated times to take our meals and our rest. So, I am sure, we shall in due time see the blessedness of having a stated time for performing the great Christian duty of Almsgiving, of offering to Almighty God of our earthly substance. Although you may for a little while feel a difficulty in getting into a habit like this, to which you are strangers, yet if you persevere consistently, with faith and prayer, and humbleness and thankfulness of heart, you will in the end find yourselves the gainers

rather than the losers, all the richer rather than the poorer, for so doing. At least, I am sure of this, unless Holy Scripture speaks falsely; for we read in the Book of Proverbs, "He that giveth unto the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and look, what he layeth out, it shall be paid him again;" and again,—“The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.” “There is that scattereth and yet increaseth: and there is that withholdeth more than is meet; but it tendeth to poverty.” As St. Paul likewise saith, “He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.”

It is *according as God hath prospered you*, brethren, that we ask, and the Apostle enjoins you, to give. One week you may have more to offer, another week less, as your circumstances may prove; but I trust you will never come altogether empty-handed, unless you really have nothing. Remember that the poor widow cast in *all that she had*, in full faith and childlike confidence that God would not allow her to suffer want in consequence. We must be merciful after our power. If we have

much, we must give plenteously. If we have little, we must do our diligence gladly to give of that little. Above all, let us bear in mind that it is the *disposition of the heart* to which God looks, and that He loveth *a cheerful giver*.

I commend, dearly beloved, these considerations, which I have endeavoured to lay before you as plainly as possible, to your calm and earnest attention. I have resolved to revive the Weekly Offertory in this Parish, not without much serious thought and deliberation, not without some anxiety as to the result. But I do so with prayer that God may put it into your hearts to be "ready to give and glad to distribute," and in faith and hope that He will bless and prosper a means of promoting His own work, which He through an holy Apostle has ordained:—"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him."

## SERMON II.

[PREACHED ON THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY, 1857.]

---

ST. MATT. ii. 11.

“And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.”

THE first visitors and worshippers of the Infant Christ were, as you know, my brethren, humble shepherds, instructed by an Angel while they were watching their flocks, in the plains of Bethlehem, by night. Very different is the scene now presented to our view. There is the same rude and lowly dwelling; the same little Babe lying in the arms of the same humble though blessed virgin-mother; everything around betokening her poverty and low estate. But lo! a company of strangers—men of royal race, of great wisdom and dignity, who have come from afar with a suitable retinue of servants and camels, and other marks of rank and wealth,—enter with reverence, and bow themselves down before the Infant Jesus, with all humility and

adoration and worship. Nor come they empty-handed ; they open their treasures, and present from them the costliest offerings, “ gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.”

Thus was fulfilled many a saying of the olden Scriptures, all pointing out with unmistakeable distinctness who this was in the garb of a human child in a hovel of Bethlehem :— “ The kings of Tharsis and of the isles shall give presents,” we read in the book of Psalms ; “ the kings of Arabia and Saba shall bring gifts. All kings” (for these men represented the race of kings) “ shall fall down before Him ; all nations shall do Him service . . . He shall live, and unto Him shall be given of the gold of Arabia ; prayer shall be made ever unto Him, and daily shall He be praised.” And again, the Prophet Isaiah declares, “ All they from Sheba shall come : they shall bring gold and incense ; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord.”

It was meet that these men should thus offer of their riches, for this was He at whose hands they had received them, even the Lord of all the whole earth, by whose power it was made, by whose glory it is filled. It was meet

that they should present unto Him a thank-offering, for He had led them by the star in order that He might bring them unto Himself, Who had come "a Light to lighten the Gentiles," that He might be manifested unto them Who was their Prince and their Saviour. And it was meet that, as freely He had given to them, so freely they should give; and these gifts *were* of what was in their eyes of the greatest value, and were not of such as would "cost them nothing."

But, my brethren, whether the Eastern Magi were themselves conscious of it or not, there was an aptness in these offerings beyond the mere fact of their being precious and costly. We, at all events, may discover a propriety and significance in them; and not only so, but a meaning which we may turn to our own profit.

The gold is generally thought to have been an acknowledgment, as well as an emblem, of the Royalty of Christ; the frankincense, of His Divinity; the myrrh, of His Humanity, and His sufferings therein. Gold is the most precious of the metals, and is a fitting emblem or symbol of a king. Throughout the Old Testa-

ment gold is mentioned as being in use, especially about such vessels and utensils, and parts of the tabernacle and temple, as were more immediately consecrated to the use of God, "who was the King of Israel." Thus the "mercy-seat" was to be of pure gold; the ark of the covenant was to be overlaid within and without with pure gold; Solomon made the altar of gold, and the table of gold, whereupon the shew-bread was. His own throne, too, was overlaid with gold; the Queen of Sheba, when she came to do homage unto the greatest of kings and wisest of men, brought "very much gold." "Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women," says the Psalmist: "upon thy right hand did stand the queen in a vesture of gold." And again, speaking of the king who "putteth his trust in the Lord," he says, "Thou settest a crown of pure gold upon his head." The crowns of kings are to this day, we know, usually made of gold; and in the vision of St. John the "Son of Man" appeared, "having on His head a golden crown." So that by offering gold the wise men aptly acknowledged and signified the universal sovereignty and dominion of Christ; they pre-

sented unto Him a gift, as the King of kings and Lord of Lords.

Frankincense is a gum obtained from a tree which grows in Arabia ; it burns with freedom, and gives forth a most pleasant odour. It was much used in the Jewish services of religion, and it was the business of the Priest to burn it every morning and evening upon an altar called the "altar of incense." Thus, we read in the Gospel of St. Luke, it was the "lot" of Zacharias, the father of John Baptist, "to burn incense when he went into the Temple of the Lord ;" and it was "at the time of incense" that the angel announced to him that Elisabeth should bear a son. The Priests, too, were frequently to burn incense in their censers, or vessels which they carried in their hands for that purpose : thus it was a token of the priestly office ; and hence also was there a propriety in offering it to Christ, for He came a Priest as well as a King. But the burning of it signified prayer and devotion. Thus says the Psalmist,—“ Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense.” And in the book of the Prophet Malachi we read, “ From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the



same, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto My Name, and a pure offering." And in the Revelation of St. John it is told that "Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." And the "four-and twenty elders," we read, had "every one of them golden vials full of odours (or incense), which are the prayers of the saints."

Now to God alone can prayer be made—to none other may our devotions be presented; therefore, in offering frankincense to the Infant Jesus, the Magi acknowledged that He was "very God," to Whom was to be given all adoration and worship, all honour, power, and glory for ever and ever.

Myrrh is also the gum of a tree which grows in Arabia, and is of a medicinal nature, having healing and soothing qualities. It formed

a principal ingredient of the holy or consecrating ointment used among the Jews, and thus was aptly offered to the "holy Child Jesus." With it, too, were dead bodies embalmed (as was our Saviour's by Nicodemus), and therefore was it very significant of His Humanity, which must see death. It is moreover very bitter to the taste; and may we not see in it "all the bitter things which Christ suffered in our stead? His agony in the garden, His sufferings in the judgment-hall, His bending under the weight of the cross, the bitterness of His soul while hanging on the tree, (where 'wine mingled with myrrh' was offered unto Him to drink,) all His bitter passion, and His last bitter cry?" And yet further, by His stripes are not we healed? Is He not the Healer of the nations?

Thus then, brethren, did these offerings of these Eastern Sages, while they manifested their own submission and gratitude of heart, at the same time shew forth, as in a figure, that He whom they had come to seek and to worship was the "King of the Jews," and the King of all the earth, and that He was "very God and very Man," our Divine and only Saviour.

Though of us, beloved, “sacrifice and burnt-offering,” “odours from Edom,” and “myrrh from the forest,” and “gold from the mine,” God requireth not ; yet are we bound to honour Him with our substance, by giving to the poor, and to other pious and holy uses,—such as the spread of His Gospel, and the spiritual weal of our neighbour,—according as He has given unto us. Alms’-deeds, in proportion to our means, He *does* require of us ; and with such sacrifices, offered thankfully, cheerfully, humbly, in faith, “He is well-pleased.” The alms, as well as the prayers, of Cornelius went up as a memorial before God. Costly gifts we may none of us have it in our power to offer ; but it is not the actual amount, but the amount of self-denial and sacrifice which it causes us, and the spirit in which we give, which constitute the costliness of the gift in God’s sight. The penny of one, given out of his poverty, may be a far more precious and acceptable offering than the hundred pounds of another, given out of his abundance. With that pure, and holy, and heart-searching Being with Whom we have to do, *copper* may be as gold, and gold as copper

His standard is very different, as are His ways, from man's. He judgeth true judgment.

And brethren, above all, let us offer unto our Heavenly King the pure gold of charity—love to Him and love one to another; let us humble ourselves before Him with all poverty of spirit, and obey Him with all readiness of mind, and serve Him with all singleness of heart and sincerity of purpose.

Let us offer unto our God the incense of earnest, unceasing prayer, of lively, unwearying devotion. Let us worship Him with an holy worship. Morning and evening, at all events, let us stand by the “altar of incense,” and let our supplications, and adorations, and praises ascend with a sweet savour unto the Throne of grace. And let the odour and smoke from the censers of our inmost hearts alway fill His House, when hither we come, and draw down abundant blessings on our heads.

And shall the myrrh be wanting—the myrrh of a broken and contrite heart, of bitter grief for our sins, which caused our blessed Lord to suffer? Nay, let us present unto Him a living faith, a true repentance, a self-denying,

self-mortifying, self-subduing life. Let us take up our cross, how bitter soever it may be to flesh and blood, and follow Christ the Crucified whithersoever He may lead,—follow Him up the hill of suffering to the gates of death.

“And these oblations,” says a godly Bishop of our Church<sup>a</sup>, “if we present to the holy Jesus, both our persons and our gifts shall be accepted, our sins shall be purged, our understandings enlightened, and our wills united to this holy Child, and entitled to a communion of all His glories. . . . We cannot bring gold with the rich Arabians; we may, with the poor shepherds, come and ‘kiss the Son, lest He be angry,’ and in all cases come and ‘serve Him with fear and reverence,’ and spiritual rejoicings.”

<sup>a</sup> Jeremy Taylor.

## SERMON III.

[PREACHED ON THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY, 1857.]

---

ACTS iv. 32.

“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.”

WE saw on Sunday last<sup>a</sup>, brethren, how the company of the faithful offered up with one accord their prayers and praises to Almighty God, on the release of St. Peter and St. John by the rulers of the Jews. To-day we have before us a beautiful picture of how “the multitude of them that believed” *lived and acted*. “‘They were of one heart and one soul;” they esteemed not their earthly possessions as their own, but shared one with another, for Christ’s sake and in Christ’s Name, the things which God had given them. The rich (and they, most probably, were but a few) sold their possessions, whether of lands or

<sup>a</sup> This Sermon was one of a course on the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

houses, “and brought the price of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles’ feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.” One person is especially mentioned,—“Joses, who was by the apostles surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, the Son of Consolation, or exhortation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles’ feet.” And he would appear to have been thus singled out for honourable mention, either because he was a man singularly endowed with the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, or because he first set the example of thus disposing of lands and houses for the benefit of the Brotherhood; or more probably, because “he was a *Levite*, and so connected with the Jewish hierarchy, and entitled to *receive* tithe; and the sacrifices, therefore, that *he* made in embracing Christianity, and in *contributing* to the needs of his fellow-Christians, were more than ordinary, and gained for him justly the title which he bore. Besides, his deference to the Apostolic office is an intimation that the ministry of the Levitical

Priesthood was now 'ready to vanish away,' and that the Apostles and their Successors in the Christian Church were henceforth to be regarded as the true Priests of the Israel of God. His submission was blessed by God when he himself became an Apostle. And thus in his person the Levitical Priesthood passed by a spiritual transition into the Christian Church<sup>b</sup>." Perhaps, too, this case may have been thus marked and specified as standing out in bold relief to that very painful one, a record of which immediately follows in the sacred narrative.

Now observe, in the first place, that the practice of the first disciples in respect of the sharing of their property one with another, affords no plea for that "community of goods" advocated by some evil-minded and discontented men, and which is condemned in our thirty-eighth Article, which declares that "the riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same." They did not give up the right and title to their possessions; they used those possessions as if they were not their own,

<sup>b</sup> Dr. Christopher Wordsworth.



and employed them for the good of all. They sold their lands and houses, not as a matter of obligation, but as a voluntary sacrifice to the honour and glory of God and their mutual support. They were altogether under peculiar circumstances in the infancy of the Church, more especially in Jerusalem,—surrounded by enemies who very possibly deprived the poorer brethren, when they became Christians, of the means of support, by withdrawing from them their custom and employment. We know they very soon began to suffer persecution at the hands of the unbelieving; and they also gave up much of their time, doubtless, in any case, in making known the truth as it is in Jesus. The richer, therefore, provided for the support of the poorer, out of a deep love to their common Saviour,—“esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.” “All things were indeed common amongst them,” writes Bishop Beveridge, “as to the *use* of, but not as to the *title* to, what they enjoyed. All things were so common as that none of them but willingly communicated what he had to others, but not so common as that others had a right and title

to it as well as he. . . . Though there were not any amongst them that lacked, it was not because that they that had not estates had a title to theirs that had, but because they that had estates were willing to communicate to them that had not; so that there was a communication of estates one to another, and yet not a community in one another's estates. . . . Though communion of saints be a truth which ought to be believed by all, yet community of goods is an error which cannot be received by any,—it striking at the foundation of Christian society, and subverting the whole scope of the Holy Scriptures; for if no man hath a property in anything he enjoys, but his neighbour hath as good a title to it as himself, what signify the commands of God, 'Thou shalt not steal,' 'Thou shalt not covet?' If I have as much right to my neighbour's goods as himself, how can I be said to steal anything from him? or why should I be forbidden to covet his house, when it is my own as well as his? And what, then, means that place of Scripture also, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive?' For if one man hath no more right to what he enjoys than another, how can one man

same, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles ; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My Name, and a pure offering." And in the Revelation of St. John it is told that " Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer ; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." And the " four-and-twenty elders," we read, had " every one of them golden vials full of odours (or incense), which are the prayers of the saints."

Now to God alone can prayer be made—to none other may our devotions be presented ; therefore, in offering frankincense to the Infant Jesus, the Magi acknowledged that He was " very God," to Whom was to be given all adoration and worship, all honour, power, and glory for ever and ever.

Myrrh is also the gum of a tree which grows in Arabia, and is of a medicinal nature, having healing and soothing qualities. It formed

a principal ingredient of the holy or consecrating ointment used among the Jews, and thus was aptly offered to the "holy Child Jesus." Was it, too, were dead bodies embalmed, as was our Saviour's by Nicodemus, and therefore was it very significant of His Humanity, which must see death. It is moreover very bitter to the taste; and may we not see in it all the bitter things which Christ suffered in our stead? His agony in the garden, His sufferings in the judgment-hall, His sweating under the weight of the cross, the bitterness of His soul while hanging on the tree, where "wine mingled with myrrh" was offered unto Him to drink, all His bitter passion, and His last bitter cry? And yet further, by His stripes are not we healed? Is He not the healer of the nations?

Thus then, brethren, did these offerings of these Eastern Sages, while they manifested their own submission and gratitude of heart, at the same time men forth in a figure, that He whom they had come to seek and to worship was the "King of the Jews," and the King of all the earth, and that He was "very God and very Man," our Divine and only Saviour.

is not "this unity of the primitive Church at Jerusalem like a vision and foretaste of that perfect love which will be the life of the Church, glorified in the heavenly Zion?" They were "of one heart," having one common faith, and one common hope, and one common love,—faith in Christ, the hope of heaven, the love of Jesus. One flame burned within them, as one Holy Spirit animated them,—the flame of a pure, undying, self-sacrificing affection for the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world, and for one another as united together in Him, by an indissoluble bond.

They were "of one soul,"—breathing the same divine breath, filled with the same high and holy desires, offering up the same fervent prayers, endued with the same heavenly grace, submitting to the same external authority, testifying to the same unchangeable truths, bound by the same imperishable interests, nourished with the same unearthly food.

Thus were they walking—and *together*, hand in hand, heart beating to heart, soul linked to soul—in the one narrow way which leadeth unto life. Then there were no animosities, *no rivalries*, no strifes, save with the common

enemies of their risen Lord, and their own salvation. No party bickerings disturbed the Church then, no oppositions, no gainsayings, no divisions; "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul." Truly might the Psalmist sing of this happy state of the Church,—“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.”

Would, brethren, that though we can hardly expect, perhaps, to see again such a blessed unity as this in the Church while it remains militant,—would that we might see some nearer approach to it than is presented in these latter days of dissension and disunion, and the strife of tongues, and parties, and sects. Would that “for the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart,”—searchings of our own hearts, that we might find where the root of the evil lies; and so each of us try what in us is to

remove the obstacles to that oneness of heart and soul so earnestly to be desired. Would that each of us, by our desires, our prayers, our words, our actions, might thus strive no more with one another ; but strive after unity, seek peace and ensue it. As the Apostle Paul devoutly expressed his earnest desire, “ Now the God of patience and consolation grant us to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus ; that we may with one mind and mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Entire unity of *opinion* is what we never can expect on this side the grave ; but unity of heart, and unity of purpose, and unity of fellowship, and unity of action, and unity of worship—as unity of faith,—there may and ought to be amongst the followers of Christ. A unity which can be seen and known of all men should be ours,—such a unity and such a union and communion as moved the heathen in old time to say, “ See how these Christians love one another,”—such a unity, in spirit, as that which the text indicates, which leads each man to consider his brother’s welfare as his own ; which makes all *who bear the Christian name* have but one in-

terest to work for, as they have but one Body to belong to, and one hope to animate them, and one Master to serve.

There is but one source, my brethren, whatever may be the more immediate causes, from which dissension and disunion spring, that "carnal mind which is at enmity with God." "Ye are yet carnal," writes St. Paul; "for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk according to man? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" "From whence come wars and fightings among you?" says another Apostle—wars and fightings in the spiritual as well as the natural world,—“come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?” “Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, and without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” “Blessed are the peacemakers,” the Prince of Peace Himself has declared, “*for they shall be called the children of God.*”



May He who has so strongly and repeatedly taught us that it is His will that we should be of one heart and of one soul, grant us “the spirit to think and do such things as be right-ful; that we who cannot do anything that is good without Him, may by Him be enabled to live according to His will,”—that holy will of Christian unity and brotherly love.

The circumstances of our times and the present state of society do not call for—indeed, would hardly admit of—such a course of action as that which the exigencies of the infant Church of Jerusalem demanded. Indeed, we do not find that even in the Apostolic age this entire sacrifice of personal interests and possessions was the case in other branches of the Church; on the contrary we have every reason to infer that it was not, as Almsgiving is a duty frequently enforced in the Apostolic Epistles. But though we cannot follow the example of the Jewish Christians in the *letter*, yet we must always act up to it in the *spirit*. We are not to regard, nor to use—in any age of the Church—those earthly possessions which it may please God to bestow upon us, *for our own gratification and selfish ends, but for the good of all men, and more especially*

of the household of faith. "To do good and to distribute forget not," says St. Paul; and again, "distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality;" and yet again, "Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." And the same Article of our Church which declares that "the riches and goods of Christian men are not common," adds, "Notwithstanding, every man ought of such things as he possesseth liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability." And do *we* so according to *our* ability, my brethren? That is a question which our consciences must answer as before God. It is not enough to be generous and liberal; a "heathenish good nature" may prompt to that. Many a rich man of a naturally benevolent disposition may give freely of his abundance; and I suppose none of us are so penurious and hard-hearted as not to give somewhat for the relief of the needy and distressed. But do we give in the spirit of these first disciples? Do we give so as to suffer loss for Christ, and our brethren and companions' sakes? Do we make sacrifices, painful sacrifices, denying ourselves, depriving *ourselves* of comforts, and luxuries, and enjoy-

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

of the

He said

Is of the

ese words,

urely suffi-

other speak

ttles, from one

unt them. And

ul that they have

ay, as it were, pre-

Lord had often in

instance, when He said,

st a feast, call the poor, the

the blind ; and thou shalt

ay cannot recompense thee :

recompensed at the resurrec-

And again, " Give, and it

into you ; good measure, p

ments for the good of others who as to the things of this earth, and spiritual things also, are not so favoured as we? To give so as not to miss, or feel the loss of what we give, is no sacrifice,—is not acting in the spirit of Joses and the others, who sold all they had and laid it at the apostles' feet. Nor is it so, if we calculate how *little* we can give away, instead of how *much*; nor if we give grudgingly, as of necessity, or in a grumbling, carping spirit, or for the sake of human applause; or for aught else than Christ's sake, and in Christ's Name, and to Christ's glory. And if the love of God do dwell in us and abound, we shall so love our brethren, even *more* than ourselves, as to minister alway cheerfully, freely, steadily to their wants. We shall deem it our highest privilege, our chiefest joy, to offer with no niggard hand, and no cold, calculating heart, in the person of those whom He has lovingly called His "little ones," to Him who gave up all for us, becoming poor that we might be made rich—our adorable Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

## SERMON IV.

[PREACHED ON THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS, 1858.]

---

ACTS xx. 35.

“And to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said,  
It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

WE have no record in the Gospels of the Lord Jesus having spoken these words, but the testimony of St. Paul is surely sufficient that He did some time or other speak them in the hearing of His apostles, from one or other of whom St. Paul learnt them. And we may be indeed thankful that they have been, by this indirect way, as it were, preserved to us. But our Lord had often *in effect* spoken them ; for instance, when He said, “When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind ; and thou shalt be blessed ; for they cannot recompense thee : for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.” And again, “Give, and it shall be given unto you ; good measure, pressed

down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." Indeed, throughout the whole Scriptures the duty and advantages of *giving* are most strongly and repeatedly impressed upon us.

We have the example of the Patriarch Jacob, who "vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on; then shall the Lord be my God; and of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee." Every Jew was enjoined to give at least a tenth part of his income every third year—in the year of tithing—for pious and charitable uses, "unto the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow." The Psalmist says, "Blessed be the man that provideth for the sick and needy; the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble." In the book of Proverbs we have many such maxims as these:—"The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself;"—"There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty;"—"There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath

nothing ; there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches." And in the book of the prophet Isaiah we read, "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day ; and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drouth, and make fat thy bones ; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

In the Apocryphal writings the matter is constantly, and very strikingly, brought before us in various ways. "It is better to give alms than to lay up gold," we are told by the venerable Tobit, who "did many alms-deeds to his brethren and his nation," and therefore could speak from experience. And in the "Wisdom of Jesus, the son of Sirach," or Book of Ecclesiasticus, we read, "The alms of a man is as a signet with the Lord, and He will keep the good deeds of a man as the apple of the eye, and give repentance to his sons and daughters. Afterwards He will rise up and reward them, and render their recompense upon their heads." "Lay up thy treasure according to the commandments of the Most

High, and it shall bring thee more profit than gold. Shut up alms in thy storehouses, and it shall deliver thee from all affliction. It shall fight for thee against thine enemies better than a mighty shield and strong spear." "He that requiteth a good turn offereth fine flour; and he that giveth alms sacrificeth praise." "Thou shalt not appear empty before the Lord." "Brethren and help are against the time of trouble; but alms shall deliver more than them both."

Beside the sayings of our blessed Lord which I have already cited, we have the case in which He desired the rich young man to "sell all that he had and give to the poor, and he should have treasure in heaven." And again He said to the Pharisees, "But rather give alms of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you." And to His disciples He said, "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not. . . . For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." In the Apostolic Epistles, too, we have several such passages; *as, for example*, St. Paul to the Corinthians:



“He that soweth little shall reap little ; and he that soweth plenteously shall reap plenteously ;” and to the Galatians :—“ While we have time, let us do good unto all men ; and especially unto them that are of the household of faith ;” and to the Hebrews :—“ To do good and to distribute forget not ; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” And St. John writes, “ Whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?” So that we may well exclaim with Bishop Wilson, “ What a heap of arguments and expressions are here to encourage men to charity !”

But in the text we are not only told that it is a blessed thing to give, but that it is *more* blessed to give than to receive. Not more blessed, be it observed, to be rich, and so have more to give ; but more blessed to *give*—to do good with what we have, be it much or little, rather than to increase it and make it more. This is indeed utterly contrary to the maxims and policy of the world, which makes “ Every man for himself” its motto. The men of this world are afraid of giving ;—“ Giving,”

say they, “ undoes all,” for to *get* is the great aim of man’s existence ; they are, as the prophet Isaiah says, “ greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand ; they all look to their own way, every one for his gain from his quarter.” “ Clear gain with them is the most blessed thing that can be ; but Christ tells us, ‘ It is more blessed,’ more excellent in itself, an evidence of a more excellent disposition of mind, and the way to a better blessedness at last, ‘ to give than to receive \*.’ ” It is more blessed, because “ It is a sign of our victory over the world, and that our conversation is in heaven, that we have worthy apprehensions of God, and honourable thoughts of His Providence ; and that we can trust Him, and give Him a part of His own whenever He calls for it.” It is more blessed, because “ there is a more lasting pleasure in giving than in receiving. An alms taken is soon spent and forgotten, and the pleasure of it is over in a few moments ; but the pleasure of giving bears us company all along in this world, and will keep us company in the next ; there

• Matthew Henry.

is no such satisfactory pleasure as in doing good<sup>b</sup>." Lastly, it is more blessed to give than to receive, because "it makes us more like to God, Who gives to all and receives from none;" and more like the Lord Jesus, Who continually "went about doing good,"—yea, more, Who gave *Himself* for us; who "saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied."

"Our God hath not, as unbelieving, covetous men suppose, wished us to lose what we have," writes the holy Father St. Augustine: "if what hath been enjoined us be properly understood, and piously believed, and devoutly received, He hath not enjoined us to lose, but rather shewn a place where we may lay up. For no man can help thinking of his treasure, and following his riches in a kind of journeying of the heart. If, then, they are buried in the earth, his heart will seek the lowest earth; but if they are reserved in heaven, his heart will be above. If Christians, therefore, have the will to do what they know, that they also may make open profession of<sup>c</sup>; if they have the

<sup>b</sup> Burkitt.

<sup>c</sup> • St. Augustine is alluding to the *Sursum Corda* in the Eucharistic Office.

will to 'lift up the heart' above, let them lay up there what they love ; and though yet in the flesh on earth, let them dwell with Christ in heart ; and as Her Head went before the Church, so let the heart of the Christian go before him. As the members are to go whither Christ the Head hath gone before, so shall each man at his rising again go whither his heart hath now gone before. Let us go hence, then, by that part of us which we may ; our whole man will follow whither one part of us is gone before. Our earthly house must fall to ruin, our heavenly house is eternal. Let us move our goods beforehand whither we ourselves are getting ready to come."

A provident labouring man, or servant, puts a portion of his earnings into the Savings-bank, in order that he may by degrees gather together a little store against a day of need, should it please God to send it ; or as a provision for old age : and there his or her money lies at interest, and the interest goes to increase the sum itself, so that when it is drawn there will be considerably more than was put in. And this is very right and proper, and I would that *both men and women*, especially young farm-

ing-men, and mechanics, and maid-servants, would be thus provident, and lay by such earnings as they do not actually require for their wants, instead of spending them upon dress and trumpery finery, or in the public-house, or at fairs and statutes,—those field-days of the devil.

But the *best* Savings-bank that we can put our money in, brethren, is the Lord's Treasury. It is safer there than anywhere else, for it is in God's keeping ; it bears higher interest, even the blessing of the Most High ; it will *always* be ours, because it is treasure laid up in heaven. "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord ; and that which he hath given He will pay him again." "It is *more blessed* to give than to receive." "But how different is this saying of our Lord from the ordinary discourse, and from the prevailing practice of many amongst us, His professed disciples ! Who that should listen to our common conversation, or should watch our daily works, would not suppose it to be an acknowledged truth that to receive is more blessed than to give ? Why else do many take such anxious thought for what they shall

eat and what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed ; whilst few take pains how they may best feed the hungry, or clothe the naked, or supply the spiritual wants of them that lack the means of grace ; few labour with like anxiety to bestow their alms as they that must give account to a Master which is in heaven ? Why else are we so reluctant to propose to one another occasions of Christian Almsgiving ? Why are we so apt to find excuses when such objects are proposed, however urgently, to ourselves ? We cannot surely believe in our hearts what the Apostle has charged us to remember as a saying of our adorable Redeemer's. We do not understand, or we will not be persuaded, that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive<sup>d</sup>.' "

If we thought more about heaven and less about this poor perishing earth, then we should be better able to understand it. If we loved our Lord and our brethren, for His sake, more than our poor insignificant selves, then we should more readily apprehend and act upon His saying.

The statement of our first year's experience

<sup>d</sup> Girdlestone.

of the Weekly Offertory is ere this in the hands of every one of you, brethren. A copy has been left in every house in the Parish, and I trust you have all carefully read and calmly considered it. I said, on starting the Weekly Offertory, that I felt convinced that the right way—the way of Holy Scripture and the Church—must be the best way; and so it has proved, notwithstanding some disadvantages which we have had to contend against. We have collected a third more than in any previous year. We have been able to give to the missionary work of the Church the sum of £17 instead of £10; and this without withdrawing anything from our own poor. Now, I daresay when we began this new plan, or rather this *old* plan,—the plan which has prevailed in Christ's Church for more than 1800 years, but which had been disregarded by us,—I daresay some of you may have thought, or even said, "I don't like these new-fangled ways at all; so much will go to the Missionaries, that there will be very little left for us." But if any of you did think or say this, it shewed that you did not remember your Lord's words, "It is more blessed to give than to

.

receive.” It shewed, too, somewhat of a murmuring, carping spirit, and a want of faith in Him who could from a very few small loaves and fishes feed thousands. And you see all such fears have been anything but realized. Not only have we, as a Parish, cast more into the Lord’s Treasury for the Church’s work elsewhere, but more, considerably more, has been given away in the Parish itself than for the last twenty years, which is as far back as I have any record to shew me how the Sacramental alms have been distributed.

You will perceive, too, that the amount given (of the alms offered in Church) to the several religious Societies in connection with the Church, which I selected with the Bishop’s approval, has been *equally*\* divided amongst them.

As I have said in my pastoral letter, my brethren, the result of our first year’s experience of the Weekly Offertory is most cheering, and affords ground for deep thankfulness to Almighty God, Who has put it into the hearts of those who *have* given, to give liberally of their substance. But we must not

\* I have reason to believe that some persons had imagined, *I know not why, that this was not to be the case.*



indulge in any self-complacent satisfaction or pride, or think we have done enough. No, by God's grace and help we must do far more ; and let us start upon this new year with the intention of doing far more ; and if some amongst us do not see fit to cast in their offerings with ours, we must give *for* them,—just as St. Paul says, with commendation, that the Church at Philippi supplied that which was lacking in other Churches, by generously ministering to his wants. You must bear in mind, brethren, that in this Parish you have no tithes to pay ; you are not called upon to contribute towards the maintenance of God's ministering Servant among you, as most other Parishes are ; and, therefore, you *ought* to give more freely to God of that which He has given to you.

In reading an account the other day of that portion of India which has been Christianized—the district of Tinnevely,—I observed that the people of one portion of the district had contributed in one year the sum of £60 by the Weekly Offertory towards Church purposes. Now that sum was contributed by a considerably larger number of people than this parish

contains; but it was contributed entirely by the poor Shanars,—and “a good agricultural labourer in Tinnevely will think himself well paid if he earns *a shilling a-week*. A man with an income of ten shillings a-week is looked upon as a gentleman;” but, says the missionary in whose parish the sum of £60 was collected, “I am not fortunate enough to have any such gentlemen in my congregation!” So that that sum was, in proportion, much larger than the £32 which we have collected in the past year; and the example of these our poor brethren, only just won over from the ranks of heathenism, may well stir us up to make greater efforts in denying ourselves for Christ’s sake.

We sometimes hear people say,—“I am not so well off as I was; my circumstances have worsened instead of bettered, and therefore I cannot give so much as I used.” And this may be the case; but I think our charities ought to be the *last* thing we should curtail, instead of the first. We ought to suffer much before reducing them. I have been greatly struck by what I have observed in the *Sacra*

. ‘ See “Colonial Church Chronicle” for November, 1857.

*Privata* (or Private Meditations, Devotions, and Prayers) of the good Bishop Wilson, of Sodor and Man. In the year 1716, he resolved to “dedicate to the glory of God three-tenths of his rent to pious uses, and one-tenth of all the profits of his demesnes to be turned into corn for poor families; and two-tenths of his English estate, till he could purchase the impropriate tithes for the use of the Vicar, and after that one-tenth besides.” In the year 1718 he writes, “To the glory of God. I find by constant experience that God will be no man’s debtor. I find that I have enough and to spare, so that for the future I dedicate four-tenths of my ecclesiastical incomes and rents to pious uses, one-tenth of the profits of the demesnes in corn and customs, which I receive in moneys, and of my English estate as above. And the good Lord accept His poor servant in this service for Christ’s sake. Amen.”

Again, on St. Thomas’ Eve, in the year 1721, the saintly Bishop records, “I do this day in gratitude to my bountiful Creator dedicate the interest of all my moneys to pious uses, so long as I have wherewithal to live on besides. Blessed be God for giving me an

heart and will to do so." And this Bishop was one, brethren, who lived very frugally, and spent next to nothing on himself.

Now on Dec. 23rd, 1722, we have this remarkable entry:—"I made the above dedications when I had enough and to spare, and this I did in a grateful return to God for the undeserved bounties He has heaped upon me. It has now pleased Him to suffer me to fall into troubles and an expensive law-suit, in defence of the discipline of His Church and the episcopal jurisdiction. He is the same great and good God, who can either shorten my troubles, or lessen my expenses, or make good my losses in another life. In sure confidence of which, and as a testimony of my firm faith in His power, truth, and goodness, I do dedicate for the future,"—what, three-tenths or two-tenths, because I am a poorer man? No, but—"five-tenths of my ecclesiastical rents to pious uses, and the rest as above. And blessed be the good Spirit of God, who at this time has put this thing into my heart, as an earnest of His purpose to wean my affections from this world and its idols."

*And what was the result of this pious re-*

solve of this faithful servant of the Most High? On Sept. 10th, 1723, there is this N.B.: "God has not disappointed my trust in Him; for He has raised up such friends to countenance my righteous cause, as has brought it to a good end, and has also raised me up such friends, many of them unknown to me, as hath made the burden of my expenses tolerable, which would otherwise have almost sunk me. Blessed be God for this mighty favour."

Here, dearly beloved, have we indeed a glorious example, and a wonderful lesson, and a mighty encouragement. Here have we a most striking verification of the words of the Lord Jesus, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Let us learn, each in our little way, to "go and do likewise." As the same godly Bishop has said, "Almsgiving never lessened, but rather increaseth, a poor man's estate. The rich may indeed give much, and reserve much for themselves. The poor, who gives all, reserves nothing to himself, but faith in God's providence?"

Above all, brethren, while week by week we give freely, let us give cheerfully; and let us give as *unto the Lord*, with a thankful heart.

and humble mind. “In all thy gifts shew a cheerful countenance, and dedicate thy tithes with gladness. Give unto the Most High according as He hath enriched thee. For the Lord recompenseth, and will give thee seven times as much. But do not think to corrupt (God) with gifts, and trust not to unrighteous sacrifices, for the Lord is Judge<sup>s</sup>.”

<sup>s</sup> Ecclus. xxxv. 9—12.

## APPENDIX I.

---

### TO THE PARISHIONERS OF HAWKSWORTH.

PEACE BE WITH YOU.

DEARLY BELOVED,

As I have recently drawn your attention, in a sermon, to the Apostolic injunction, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him," (1 Cor. xvi. 2); and as I have restored the Weekly Offertory, which the Church of England has directed to be made in conformity with the Apostle's rule; I think it advisable to set before you in print (that there may be no misunderstanding) the plan proposed for the disposal of your offerings:—

- I. A sum equal to that which has, on the average of the last five years, been collected when the Holy Communion has been celebrated, will be set apart for the needs of the poorer brethren amongst us, and will be distributed as aforetime.
- II. The alms over and above this will be divided among the three Corporated Societies

of the Church, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the Society for providing Additional Curates in Populous Places, and the Church Missionary Society.

The *Corporated* Societies are those which have received a royal charter, or deed of corporation, and consist of,—

1. The Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts ;
2. The National School Society ;
3. The Church Building Society.

The Christian Knowledge, Additional Curates, and Church Missionary Societies have not received a royal charter, and therefore are not incorporated, but they are all in connection with the English Church ; and as they are eminently useful,—the first two in providing wholesome instruction and spiritual ministrations for our overgrown and crowded towns and districts, and the last in spreading the Gospel amongst the heathen,—I have included them.

We shall thus aid in supporting what may be called the Home and Foreign Missions of the Church<sup>a</sup>.

If any of you have any objections to make to this scheme, or have any suggestions to offer, or

<sup>a</sup> As I stated in my sermon, occasions may arise when the Offertory for *that day* will be devoted (due notice having been *given*) to some specific object which may have a claim upon our support.



wish for any explanations, I hope you will come to me and state them, or ask for them, as the case may be, without hesitation.

I have lately been bringing the duty of Almsgiving before you through the duly authorised teaching of your Church herself, by reading to you on successive Sundays the Homily of Almsdeeds, or Mercifulness. I trust those godly exhortations have fallen on honest and good hearts, and may bring forth much fruit.

I conclude with once more reminding you of the Apostle's words, "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."

Wishing you, dearly beloved, every temporal and spiritual blessing, and praying the good God to give you a right judgment in all things,

I remain,

Your affectionate Pastor, and faithful  
Brother in Christ,

GEORGE HUNT SMYTTAN.

P.S.—I forwarded the above letter to the Bishop of the diocese, before sending it to the printer, and his Lordship says in reply,—

"My dear Sir,—I am glad to find that you have established the Weekly Offertory. I believe that in this way the Church will best be enabled

to discharge its duties towards the heathen abroad, and towards the temporally and spiritually needy at home.

“It is a hopeful sign of our times, that the prejudices against the practice, which arise naturally enough from causes with which it had no necessary connexion, are dying away; and that the Laity in several large places have come forward to *ask* for the Weekly Offertory, in lieu of the troublesome, and often inefficient machinery of collectors, appeals, &c.

“With my prayers that God’s blessing may be on your work,

“I am, my dear Sir, yours faithfully,

J. LINCOLN.”

“*Riseholme, January 7th, 1857.*”

---

“LAY UP THY TREASURE ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE MOST HIGH, AND IT SHALL BRING THEE MORE PROFIT THAN GOLD.

“SHUT UP ALMS IN THY STOREHOUSES; AND IT SHALL DELIVER THEE FROM ALL AFFLICTION. IT SHALL FIGHT FOR THEE AGAINST THINE ENEMIES BETTER THAN A MIGHTY SHIELD AND STRONG SPEAR.”—*Ecclesiasticus* xxix. 11—13.

*Rectory, Second Sunday after Epiphany, 1857.*

## APPENDIX II.

---

### TO THE PARISHIONERS OF HAWKSWORTH.

PEACE BE WITH YOU.

DEARLY BELOVED,

At the beginning of the present year we commenced in this parish the system of the Weekly Offertory, as enjoined at once by the Word of God and the Book of Common Prayer.

It is now my duty to lay before you the result of these weekly offerings, and I do so with the deepest thankfulness to Almighty God, Who has prospered our handiwork far beyond my most sanguine expectations.

At the end of this letter you will find a statement of the moneys received and paid out during the year; and from it you will perceive that the sum collected by the Weekly Offertory is £22 14s. 11d $\frac{3}{4}$ ., giving a weekly average of very nearly 8 shillings and 9 pence. The weekly average of copper is 1 shilling, 2 pence, and 1 farthing. The whole amount offered in copper is £3 6s. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Now, setting aside *special* offertories, the largest sum

we have ever collected by the monthly offertory, alms and missionary-boxes, and the Parochial Missionary Association, in any previous year, is £18 3s. 7½d. The whole amount gathered this year is £25 12s. 5¼d.; and you will thus see the *increase* we have, by God's blessing, obtained through the Weekly Offertory, is £7 8s. 9¾d.

This is very encouraging, and I can account for it in no other way, but that the way of the Bible and the way of the Church is that which God will most abundantly prosper.

But, dearly beloved, satisfactory as the result of our first year's experience is, it is by no means what it ought to have been. We might, almost all of us, give more than we have done; and there are some who, I am sorry to say, have given *nothing*, though they could much better afford it than many of those who have given most regularly. We can but pray that God will graciously soften and turn their hearts, and bring them to a better mind. And let us all strive to bring yet more liberal and frequent gifts, and cast them into the Lord's Treasury with a thankful heart and reverent, cheerful spirit. Every year greater efforts are demanded from the Church, both in behalf of the heathen who have no knowledge of the one true God, and in behalf of our fellow-countrymen, whether at home or abroad, who are perishing for lack of the Means of Grace.

Let us do what in us lies to further this great and glorious work. "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches."

Wishing you all peace and joy during the year on which we shall shortly enter—that it may be to every one of you a truly happy New Year,

I remain,

Your affectionate Pastor, and faithful Brother  
in Christ Jesus our Lord,

GEORGE HUNT SMYTTAN.

*Rectory, Eve of the Circumcision, 1857.*

P.S. A statement of the moneys received and paid out is on the other side.

RECEIVED.		PAID OUT.	
	£. s. d.		£. s. d.
Balance from 1856	. 5 7 2	To the Fund for the sufferers in India	. 4 14 5
Weekly Offertory	. 22 14 11½	To Diocesan Board of Education	. 1 3 1½
Special Offertories	. 5 17 6½	Given away, in alms, during the year	. 3 3 0
Proceeds of Timber cut down in Churchyard,		To the National School Society	. 2 8 4
given by the Rector	. 0 12 3	To the Christian Knowledge Society	. 2 8 4
Alms-Box	. 0 5 9	To the Church Building Society	. 2 8 4
Five Missionary-Boxes for S. P. G.	. 2 11 8½	To the Additional Curates' Society	. 2 8 4
		To the Gospel Propagation Society	. 2 8 4
		To the Church Missionary Society	. 2 8 4
		Proceeds of Missionary-Boxes, to S. P. G.	. 2 11 8½
		Coals distributed in the Parish at Christmas-tide	6 3 6
		Balance in hand	. 5 3 7½
	<u>£37 9 4½</u>		<u>£37 9 4½</u>

The Parish of Hawksworth contains about 180 souls. There are no resident gentry in it.

I am truly thankful to be able to say that, by God's blessing, the foregoing Statement has been the means of convincing more than one of those persons in the Parish who had hitherto abstained from offering Alms, of their G. H. S. pastor.

